

since morning, and that all had declined, including the individuals who had for the last ten years, been engaged in medico-legal examinations by authority. And the officer now proposed that if he would accept, his name should be inserted, and he would thus become entitled to the usual fee. Dr. Cambrelin declined assenting to this, and waited upon the Commissary of Police. To him, he stated, that he had not particularly attended to medico-legal investigations during the last ten years—that the inquiry in question was a difficult one, particularly as many new points had been discussed within the period—that as the evening was rapidly coming on, some difficulties would be encountered in determining the condition of the various organs to be examined by candle-light, and above all, that the duty properly belonged to the medical officer, who had for years, attended to medico-legal dissections.

The Commissary in reply threatened to complain of him to the tribunal of police, unless he immediately undertook the examination. Dr. Cambrelin answered, make then your complaint.

When brought before the court, he presented the above points of defence, with others, but was found guilty of an infraction of the 475th article of the Penal Code, which is of the following import:

An individual may be fined from six to ten francs, who shall refuse or neglect to give the necessary assistance, when required, in cases of accidents, shipwrecks, inundations, as also in cases of robberies, of individuals taken in the fact of committing crimes (*flagrante delicto*) hue and cry, and *judicial acts*. (Execution judiciale.)

It was, doubtless, under the last clause that this decision was justified. Dr. Cambrelin in an able argument proves it to be arbitrary and unjust, and declares his intention of appealing to the superior court.—*Annales D'Hygiene*, October 1840.

T. R. B.

94. *Poisoning with flour containing lead.* By Dr. SCHILLBACH (*Frorieps Notizen*). Six members of a family were suddenly seized with obstinate constipation, uneasiness, vomiting, colic; to these symptoms, succeeded spasms and pains, principally of the hands and feet, remarkable emaciation, paleness and anxiety. The eldest son, who suffered most, presented dilatation of the pupils, paralytic rigidity of the limbs, retraction of the abdomen, a livid complexion and excessive emaciation. It was supposed that these symptoms arose from poisoning with lead, but without the least trace of that poison, until at last, there was found in the cupboard where the family kept their flour, a box full of small shot. As this box was cracked, it was supposed that a certain quantity of the lead had fallen into the flour, and accordingly an analysis of the small portion of the flour that still remained showed traces of this metal. The patients gradually recovered after treatment with calomel and opium, and other medicines. The author cites as illustrative of the above, a case of severe lead colic, brought on by drinking wine from a bottle which had contained some grains of lead.—*Edinburgh Monthly Journ. of Med. Sci.* T. R. B.

95. *On the varieties observed in the symptoms of poisoning with Opium.* By DAVID SKAE, Lecturer on Forensic Medicine.—*Period at which stupor occurs.* If solid opium has been swallowed, it commonly commences from half an hour to an hour. In a case, however, by Desruelles, where two drachms of solid opium had been taken, the stupor was complete in fifteen minutes, and on the other hand, in the case where the largest quantity was swallowed which has been recorded (American Medical Recorder, vol. 13), viz. eight drachms of crude opium, the patient was able, an hour afterwards, to tell her physician connectedly, what she had done. When the poison has been taken in solution, or in the form of tincture, it acts more rapidly. In several instances, hopeless coma has been completely formed in half an hour, and the poison must have begun to act in ten or fifteen minutes. An example of this will be presently stated.

Sleep seems to retard the operation of opium, provided it occurs immediately after taking it. There are several instances on record of this description. In

one that occurred to Dr. Skae, half an ounce of laudanum was taken, the individual slept thereafter for an hour, and then arose from bed and procured a drink for himself, yet in about ten hours afterwards he died with all the symptoms of narcotic poisoning.

Spontaneous vomiting occasionally takes place. *Convulsions* rarely, but when they do occur they are violent, and in only occasional instances, accompanied with delirium. *Diarrhoea* and *colic*, in some cases, and *diuresis* in others, now and then happen, although ordinarily the opposite effects are produced.

Death usually follows in from seven to twelve hours. There are instances, however, in which life was prolonged for fifteen, seventeen, and twenty-four hours, and again individuals have died in five, four, or three hours.

The following remarkable case varies in several respects from the usual course of symptoms. A soldier in the 29th Regiment stationed in Edinburgh Castle took two and a half ounces of the *liquor opii sedativus*, twenty minutes before nine P. M. He was seen *a quarter of an hour* thereafter by Dr. Cooper, the surgeon, who found him totally *insensible*. The face was purple, and the features distorted, the pupils *dilated* and *insensible*, the breathing *stertorous* and accompanied with *hiccup*, and the pulse slow and small. The stomach was emptied and washed out by means of the *stomach pump*, and the other remedies usual in such cases were adopted, but the man expired at ten P. M., *an hour and twenty minutes* after swallowing the poison. The body was examined carefully, and with the exception of the liver, which exhibited extensive disease of old standing, no morbid appearances of any note were found. The blood-vessels within the cranium contained a considerable quantity of blood, and some serous fluid was found in the lateral ventricles. The fingers and toes were contracted, and still rigidly retained their positions. From this circumstance, and from the distortion of the features during life, it may be conjectured that the individual died partially convulsed. It is probably the most rapidly fatal case on record.—

T. R. B.

96. Advanced stage of the Putrefaction of the Brain, without any corresponding appearances in the rest of the body.—M. MILLET calls the attention of medical jurists to the facts of the following case. On the 29th of August, 1840, an individual (a patient of M. Leuret) labouring under dementia and general paralysis expired. The body was, a few hours thereafter, removed to a cool room and laid on a zinc table. Here it remained during forty-one hours, when the dissection commenced. The temperature was about 86° of Fahrenheit.

The *dura mater* was found strongly adhering in several places. After separating it, and opening into the brain, the cerebral mass of both hemispheres was seen converted into a yellowish-green fluid streaked with blood, of an offensive and penetrating odour. In the midst of this putrid mass, near the left *corpus striatum*, there was a portion more solid and resisting, evidently the result of a ruptured vessel (*un foyer apoplectique*.) It was surrounded by a number of whitish vesicles, which on being opened, discharged a brick-red matter.

When the cerebral mass was spread on the table, it was scarcely possible to distinguish any of the circumvolutions—so complete had been the progress of putrefaction. Indeed the lower part of the brain was green, and more spotted than the upper. The cerebellum was also in a state of complete solution, and even the spinal marrow, on being traced, was in a similar condition and of a gray colour passing to green.

On the other hand, the right lung was healthy, but engorged; the left lung bore the marks of effusion, with some recently formed membranes; the heart was flaccid and discoloured; the *stomach* and *intestines* healthy; the liver and spleen a little softened and enlarged; the muscles of the trunk and extremities firm and hard; and the external appearance as usual in a dead body, except that the skin of the superior extremities was slightly greenish.

Mr. Millet inquires, if the head of this individual had been separated from the body (as in a case of assassination), any medical jurist would have recognized their connection, or whether he would assign so short a period since death, as two days?—*Annales D'Hygiène* January, 1841.

T. R. B.